

A CERTAIN RULE,

To Find out

How many Honest Men there are in this NATION.

Fitted for the Use of all Sorts,

Whether Church-of-England-Men, Presbyterians, Independents, Anabaptists, Quakers, or Papists.

And Proper to be Set up

In all Schools, Shops, Parlours, Chambers, or Closets, both in City and Country, in Court and Camp.

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Since Numbring the People has been so fashionable of late, I have had a Temptation of putting the Work forward, not in such manner as may any ways give Offence either to God or Man; but so as to make it acceptable to both. And therefore, since some have made so exact an Enquiry into the several Divisions in this Nation, as to discover, such a Party to comprehend an Hundred to One of such another: Another to be a Third Part of the Nation, &c. So many Church-of-England-Men, so many Papists, so many Dissenters, &c. I earnestly beg these Accountants to look over their Lists again, and tell me, how many of St. Paul's Christians there are amongst them all. A Catalogue of these would be an Excellent Work, and much more Edifying than all the rest; for however some may please themselves, that they join with such a Communion; others, that they Assemble with such a Congregation, yet all this is but an Empty Name, a Vain Satisfaction, if they are not of this List of St. Paul's Christians. I do not intend by this, as if St. Paul set up a Particular Order of Christians by himself, distinct from those, who were the true Followers of Christ, but I call those St. Paul's Christians, who fill up that Practical Character of a Christian, as is described by St. Paul, and lead their Lives according to those Rules and Directions given by this Apostle in his Epistles extant in Holy Writ. For St. Paul taking occasion in his Letters he Writ to the First Christians of several Nations, to prescribe them a Method of their Lives and Conversation; what they ought to do, and what to avoid; 'tis certain, that in them he spoke to us; that in reproving their Follies and Extravagancies, he condemn'd ours; and in giving Directions to them, he instructed us in the Conditions and Qualifications of good Christians. 'Tis a List then of such as live according to these Rules and Directions laid down by St. Paul, I would gladly see; and to give some Encouragement to the helping this forward, I'll here set down some of the Chief Qualities and Conditions requir'd by St. Paul for such a good Christian.

Some Principal Conditions and Qualifications necessary for every honest Man and good Christian, as set down by St. Paul.

- I.** (a) *Rom. 1.29.* (a) TO avoid all Unrighteousness, Fornication, Wickedness, Covetousness, Maliciousness, Envy, Murder, Debate, Deceit, (b) *Rom. 1.29.* Malice; (c) Not to be a Whore, Backbiter, Hater of God, Despiser, Proud, Boaster, Inventor of Evil Things, Disobedient to Parents, Covenant-breaker, without Natural Affection, Implacable, Unmerciful.
- II.** (a) *Rom. 2.8.* (a) Not to be Contentious; (b) not to do Wrong, not to Defraud our Brethren, (c) nor Corrupt any Man; (d) not to be a Fornicator, nor Idolater, nor Adulterer, nor Effeminate, nor Abuser of himself with mankind, nor a Drunkard, nor a Drunkard, nor a Re- (d) *1 Cor. 6.9,10.*
- III.** (a) *Gal. 5.15,16.* (a) Not to Bite and Devour others; not to fulfil the Lufts of the Flesh; to avoid Adultery, Fornication, Uncleanness, Lasciviousness, Idolatry, Witchcraft, Hatred, Variance, Seditions, Heresies, Envyings, Murders, Drunkenness, Revelings. (b) To put away Lying, and every Man speak Truth with his Neighbour; Let not the Sun go down upon his Wrath; nor give place to the Devil; Let him that stole, steal no more, let no corrupt Communication proceed out of his Mouth.
- IV.** (a) *Ephes. 4.31.* (a) Let all Bitterness, and Wrath, and Anger, and Clamour, and Evil Speaking, be put away from him. (b) But Fornication, and all Uncleanness, or Covetousness, let it not be once named: Neither Filthiness, nor Foolish Talking, nor Jefting, which are not convenient; And let him have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of Darkeness, but rather reprove them.
- V.** (a) *Phil. 2.3,14.* Let nothing be done through Strife, or Vain-glory, but in Lowliness of Mind, without Murmuring, and Disputings. Put off Malice, Blasphe-my, Filthy Communication out of his Mouth.
- VI.** (a) *1 Thess. 5.15.* (a) Let him not render Evil for Evil; (b) Nor give heed to Fables, Let him not be Prophane, nor a Murderer, nor Lye, nor Perjur'd. (c) Let him not be High-minded, nor trust in uncertain Riches: avoid Prophane and Vain Babbling, and opposition of Science, vainly so called, (d) and refuse prophane and old Wives Fables.
- VII.** (a) *2 Tim. 3.2.* (a) Not to be a lover of his Ownself, nor Covetous, nor a Boaster, Proud, Blasphe-my, Unthankful, Unholy, a Truce-breaker, nor a False Accuser, Incontinent, Pierce, or a Despiser of those that are good; Nor a Traytor, Heady or High-minded; nor a lover of Pleasures more than of God. (b) And speak Evil of no Man.
- VIII.** (a) *Rom. 12.9,10.* Let his Love be without Diffimulation: abhor that which is Evil, cleave to that which is Good: Be kindly affectioned to Neighbours with Brotherly Love: Not slothful in Business, fervent in Spirit, serving the Lord; Patient in Tribulation; continuing instant in Prayer; given to Hospitality.
- IX.** (a) *Rom. 12.14,16.* Let him Bless them which Persecute him; Bless, and Curse not: Mind not High Things; Be not Wise in his own conceit. Recompence Man Evil for Evil; Live Peaceable, as much as in him lyeth with all Men. Avenge not himself. Feed his Enemy, if he hunger: Be not overcome of Evil, but overcome Evil with Good.
- X.** (a) *Rom. 13.1,5,7,8.* Let him be subject to Higher Powers; he must needs be subject, not only for Wrath, but for the Conscience sake. Let him render to all their Dues: Owe no Man any thing, but to love one another. Let him walk honestly, as in the Day; not in Rioting and Drunkenness, not in Chambering and Wantonness, not in Strife and Envy.
- XI.** (a) *1 Cor. 4.12.* (a) Let him not Judge his Neighbour: (b) Being Revil'd, let him Bless; Persecuted, let him suffer it: (c) Let him have Charity. Charity suffereth long, is kind, envieth not, vaunteth not itself, is not puff'd up, doth not behave it self unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provok'd, thinketh no Evil, rejoyleth not in Iniquity, but in the Truth, beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.
- XII.** (a) *2 Cor. 7.1.* (a) Let him cleanse himself from all filthiness of the Flesh and the Spirit, perfecting Holiness in the fear of the Lord. (b) Let him walk in the Spirit. The Fruit of the Spirit is Love, Joy, Peace, Long-suffering, Gentleness, Goodness, Faith, Meekness, Temperance.
- XIII.** (a) *Gal. 5.24,25.* (a) If he be Christ's, he has crucified the Flesh, with the Affections and Lufts. If he live in the Spirit, let him walk in the Spirit; let him not be desirous of Vain-glory, provoking none, envying none. (b) Let him not be weary in well-doing: let him do good unto all Men.
- XIV.** (a) *Ephes. 4.1,2,3.* Let him walk worthy of the Vocation, wherewith he is called; with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing his Neighbour in Love; endeavouring to keep the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace, speaking the Truth in Love, and being kind to others.
- XV.** (a) *Eph. 5.15,16.* (a) Let him walk circumspectly, redeeming the time, understanding what the Will of the Lord is, giving thanks always for all things, submitting to others in the fear of God. (b) Let his Conversation be as becomes the Gospel of Christ.
- XVI.** (a) *Phil. 4.5,8.* Let his Moderation be known unto all Men. Let him think on whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; If there be any virtue, if there be any praise, let him think on these things.
- XVII.** (a) *Colos. 3.1,2.* (a) Let him walk worthy of the Lord, unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God. (b) Let him seek those things which are above, set his affection on things above, not on things on the Earth. Let him mortifie his Members, which are upon Earth, Fornication, Uncleanness, Inordinate Affection, Evil Concupiscence, and Covetousness, which is Idolatry.
- XVIII.** (a) *Colos. 3.12,13.* Let him put on the Bowels of Mercies, Kindness, Humbleness of Mind, Meekness, Long-suffering, Forbearing and Forgiving others, that have a Quarrel against him. And above all things, let him put on Charity, which is the Bond of Perfectness; And whatsoever he does in Word or Deed, let him do all in the Name of the Lord Jesus.
- XIX.** (a) *Colos. 4.2,5.* (a) Let him continue in Prayer, and walk in Wisdom toward them that are without. (b) Let him study to be quiet, and do his own business. (c) Let him watch, and be sober, put on the Breastplate of Faith and Love, and for an Helmet, the Hope of Salvation. Let him warn them that are Unruly, comfort the Feeble-minded, support the Weak, be patient toward all Men, and abstain from all appearance of Evil.
- XX.** (a) *2 Thess. 3.6.* (a) Let him withdraw himself from every Brother, that Walketh disorderly, and not after the Tradition received from the Apostles. (b) Let him war a good Warfare, holding Faith and a good Conscience. (c) Let him follow after Righteousness, Godliness, Faith, Love, Patience, Meekness.
- XXI.** (a) *2 Tim. 2.19.* (a) Let every one, that nameth the Name of Christ, depart from Iniquity. (b) Let his Conversation be without Covetousness, and be content with such things as he has. Let him remember those that have the Rule over him, and submit himself.

These are some of the chief Qualifications prescribed by St. Paul, for every good Christian, who desires, as in Name, so in Life and Conversation, to be a Member of Christ: so that whatsoever else may be required to make up his Character, 'tis certain, let a man be under what Denomination he thinks best, whether of Church of England, Dissenter, Papist, &c. yet all will avail nothing, unless he takes care to comply with these Directions of the Apostle. And therefore let the Apostolic Doctrine and Purity of Faith be profess'd and taught where it will, yet 'tis a vanity to reckon all those for true Members of that Communion, who only join in Worship, assemble to Hear, and approve the Doctrine: For this is not enough; they must, besides all this, live the Life of true Christians, observe what St. Paul prescribes, and avoid what he forbids and declares to be displeasing to God. This then indeed will do; These are Christians to the purpose; And therefore, where the next Lists are made, and there is an Account of so many that go to this Congregation, and so many to another, I would have the Rolls look'd over again, and from every Congregation be deducted, all those that are Unrighteous, Fornicators, Covetous, Malicious, Deceitful, Backbiters, Drunkards, Unclean, Contentious, Liers, Cursers, &c. and so on, according to what St. Paul directs above; and then those that remain, will be a chosen Number, and the true Members of every Communion. And a List of these it is I should gladly see: Perhaps you'll think there will be but a thin Number left behind; and it may be so indeed: But then what a strange Generation are we fall'n into, in which all are so seemingly Zealous in contending for the Truth of Christianity, and yet when we come to cast up the Account the right way, there are so few Christians in earnest to be found amongst us! But what shall we say, The Balance of Men is deceitful. Their Account is cast up by halves, without due consideration; They reckon what Congregation they go to; what Doctrine they hear and believe; but not so much what their Lives are. And what signifies it, what their Faith is, if they live the Lives not of good Christians, but rather unbelievers! A Christian Faith, with an Heathenish Life will never carry a Man to Heaven. 'Tis fitting therefore, every Man should call himself to a more just Account, and not only consider, whether he goes to Hear and Worship, but likewise he Lives. These Directions of St. Paul may serve for this purpose, by which, if he Daily or Weekly examine himself, he'll soon find, what Grounds he has for true Peace of Conscience. I humbly recommend therefore this Paper to all sorts of Men.

1st. All Teachers, of what Communion or Perswasion soever, that they weigh it seriously; and remember, that a Congregation of Hearers, and not of Doers, of Believers, and not of Livers, will One Day be little to their Credit: That all Opinions and Doctrines are alike to the Evil Liver; And that 'tis to little purpose to keep their Flock to a Party, if they let them run into Hell by their wicked Lives.

2d. All Private Persons; That they peruse it carefully, and never esteem themselves truly Members of any Christian Congregation, till they make it their business to conform their Lives to these Directions of St. Paul. 'T matters not where they assemble, if they have their Hearts full of Bitterness and Anger, full of Malice and Revenge; If they lie under the Guilt of Incontinency and Covetousness, of Drunkenness and Injustice; If they have not crucified the Flesh, with the Affections and Lufts; their Conversation be not as becomes the Gospel of Christ. For however these may flatter themselves with the Name of Catholick or Reformed Christian, yet 'tis certain they do not belong to Christ.

3d. All those, who being Members of no Congregation, hope to save their Souls, by living Honestly and Justly, and giving every one their own; That they reflect upon these Rules and Directions of St. Paul, and remember, that their Honesty and Justice render them pleasing to God, must include a Compliance with all that is here directed by this Apostle; and that they deceive themselves, if without all this, they think their Honesty and Justice will ever rank them among the Blessed. Let these Men to conform their Lives in earnest to this Model of a Christian Practice, and then I don't question but 'twill be available to them.

And the observance of these Directions, gather'd out of Holy Writ, is a common Concern of all, I recommend them heartily to all, whether Church-of-England-Men, Papists, Presbyterians, Anabaptists, Independents, or Quakers, putting them in mind, that however they may think themselves oblig'd to differ from one another in other things, yet that in these Duties they are all oblig'd to agree: Let them all therefore examine their Lives and Conversations, and often call themselves to an Account these Directions of St. Paul; let them have them always in sight, both in their Shop, their Parlour, their Chamber, and their Closet, that so they may never forget their Duty. And after a short Observation both of themselves and others, they'll soon discover, who are the honest Men and good Christians. This too will soon remove our Animosities, and establish a Common Peace; and otherwise, 'tis to be fear'd, that notwithstanding all the Zealous Pretences to the Truth, we shall in a little time quite lose the Practice of Christianity, whilst we contend for the Name.